



Supreme Court of Illinois

September 28, 2018

ILLINOIS JUDICIAL CONFERENCE RECONSTITUTED TO FOCUS ON STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR JUDICIAL BRANCH

Chief Justice Lloyd A. Karmeier and the Illinois Supreme Court announced today the approval of amendments to Supreme Court Rule 41, which in 1971 established an Illinois Judicial Conference (IJC) "to consider the work of the courts, to suggest improvements in the administration of justice, and to make recommendations for the improvement of the courts." The amendments are designed to create a smaller, more active and engaged IJC, which will be tasked with creating and implementing a long-term statewide Strategic Agenda for the judicial branch.

"Strategic planning is critical to the health and vitality of any large organization – and the judicial branch is no exception," Chief Justice Karmeier said. "The courts operate in a world of ever-advancing technology, rapidly changing social and political norms, shifting demographics and economic uncertainty. If the judicial branch is to deliver on its promise of equal justice under the law, it is critical that we move forward as well. This Strategic Agenda will help us anticipate and prepare for the future."

The rule change is effective October 1. Amended Supreme Court Rule 41 is available on the Court website at <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/SupremeCourt/Rules/default.asp>

The amendments to Rule 41 were proposed by a Strategic Planning Project Work Group (Work Group), convened by the Director of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC), Marcia M. Meis, and led by the Hon. S. Gene Schwarm (retired Justice of the Illinois Appellate Court, 4th District). In researching the best practices for strategic planning, the Work Group looked at 26 state courts and the District of Columbia, ultimately selecting five states (Arizona, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Wisconsin) for in-depth review and interviewing key persons involved in strategic planning in those states. The Work Group used this information as well as input and insight from key stakeholders throughout the state, including the IJC's Committee on Strategic Planning, to create their Strategic Agenda proposal which was approved by the Supreme Court.

"I am grateful for the Supreme Court's support of this new direction for the Illinois Judicial Conference. Similar to the Supreme Court's Judicial College and its multi-disciplinary approach, the Chief Justice and judges on the new Illinois Judicial Conference will work along with other justice partners to frame the overarching goals of the judicial branch and develop a plan to achieve them. In so doing, we will be better positioned to deal with future challenges, budgetary

and otherwise, and better communicate who we are and what we do to the legislative and executive branches and the public,” Director Meis said. “The Court has appointed many talented individuals to this planning body, and it will be a thrill to work with so many creative minds in the same room. We are very fortunate to have Justice Schwarm as an important part of this effort, and I am so thankful for his commitment of time and energy as we launch this project.”

The new IJC will be comprised of 29 voting members: 15 judges and 14 non-judges, with the Chief Justice serving as Chair. In addition to the Chief Justice serving as Chair, the new structure includes the following members that are designated by position: the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County; the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Conference of Chief Circuit Judges; and the Administrative Director.

The new structure includes a total of 24 appointments by the Court: another Justice of the Supreme Court, a member of the Access to Justice Commission, a member of the Judicial College Board of Trustees, an appellate judge, judges representing each of the five appellate court districts, court clerks, trial court administrators, attorneys, members of the public and a non-judge involved in the judicial branch or administration of justice. The inaugural membership has staggered term end dates, resulting in a one-third turnover of membership per year after the inaugural terms. Members appointed or reappointed following these inaugural terms will serve three-year terms. Other than the inaugural membership, no member will serve more than two consecutive three-year terms (six years total), subject to the Court’s discretion.

The amendments to Rule 41 allow the new IJC to establish *ad hoc* committees, taskforces and workgroups, as necessary, and also provide for the AOIC to staff the new IJC. The IJC will meet at least once annually at a place and on a date to be designated by the Chief Justice.

When the appointment of the new IJC is completed, the group, facilitated by interactive sessions with a strategic planning consultant, will determine a mission statement, vision statement and organization values to be included in the Strategic Agenda. This will be the development phase, with the implementation phase expected to begin in late 2019.

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(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Chris Bonjean, Communications Director to the Illinois Supreme Court at 312.793.2323 or cbonjean@illinoiscourts.gov or James Brunner, Senior Communications Specialist, at 312.793.6155 or jbrunner@illinoiscourts.gov)